1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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XXXV

THE TALENSE (*continued*)

Property and Inheritance. Particular Significance of Certain Relationship Terms. Rites de Passage. Shrines. Soothsayers

428 PROPERTY *and Inheritance:* The rules already given in Chapter XXII for the devolution of private, family, and ancestral property apply equally here. I noted, however, in many cases, deliberate attempts to mislead the enquirer, being repeatedly told that the son succeeds to his father's property to the exclusion of the brother. In every case where such a statement was made it was found that the wish was father of the thought, and that in no case was such succession in conformity with Native customary law. In one of the histories recorded in the previous chapter it will be noted that a son succeeded his father, but this was only due to the coincidence that when *Misore* was driven away from Mampruse he was not accompanied by any of his brothers. The real facts are, that, where there are no brothers, the eldest 'son,' not necessarily of the deceased—he may be son of deceased's brother—succeeds.

582 *Particular Significance of Certain Relationship Terms*: No new facts were disclosed which have not already been discussed, save in connexion with the marriage avoidances relating to cross-cousins.[1] With regard to these, the following, perhaps ingenious rather than convincing, excuse was given for the prevalent dislike for such unions.

582 'If you married your mother's brother's daughter, and quarrelled about the cows paid to your *aben* or *asen* (maternal uncle, Nankane
586 *csiba*) for *sull*, (Nankane, *sulle*), this would lead to trouble. Suppose you quarrelled with your wife after marriage and she returned to her father, who is your maternal uncle, you would ask him to return the cows. Should he not do so, you would be entitled to seize cows belonging to any person from his, that is from your own mother's, town; you would descend into the valley (*sig boog nwoy nigi*; Nankane, *sig boo nyoge*). After doing so you could no longer perform sacrifices to your mother or to her mother; you would not sleep; your children would die, and your uncle would also suffer.'

Marriage with Father's Sister's Daughter: A somewhat similar explanation was given for this avoidance. 'You cannot marry her because

[1] See p. 4.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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XLI

THE KUSASE (*continued*)

Property and Inheritance. Rites de Passage

768
●428 IF the heir, who is the deceased's next eldest brother, is a *mey dan pud sob* (a greedy person) he will come, almost immediately, after the final funeral custom, to see about the division of the deceased's property.[1] He will tell the eldest son to produce all his late father's cowries. These the heir shares out among the sons, giving the eldest son most, because he is the one who will sacrifice to his father. The heir also takes some, but less than he gives to the eldest son. The eldest son accounts to the heir for all the cattle, sheep, horses, goats, donkeys, fowls, and guinea-fowls, which had belonged to the deceased, but once having done so, these remain under the care of the son, the heir drawing on them from time to time when he needs any. Though these remain in charge of the son, he has not any right to sell or lend any of them, and if asked to do so, he will say, "No, they belong to my 'father' ". The heir has already become head of his own compound, so he does not inherit the compound of the deceased. The deceased's eldest son will return to it and all his younger brothers who are married will quit, leaving only his unmarried brothers.'

Inheritance of Farms: 'The eldest son of the deceased takes the *saman* farm (near the compound), and his brothers who are "going out" take the *put* (bush farms). The heir has his own *saman* and does not take any farm of the deceased. Standing crops and crops in the grain-store are divided among those who had helped the deceased to work on his farm, but widows of the deceased who do not marry clansmen do not get any of this.'

Clothes, Hoes, Axes, &c.: 'The day the heir comes to see the property, he will see all these things, but will leave everything with the son.'

[778] *Shrines*: 'The eldest son will take his father's spirit, building a *bay* (shrine) for it; the heir will take the shrine of the deceased's father to his own compound and all family ancestral shrines and family ancestral "medicine". All personal "medicine" belonging to the deceased is taken by the son.'

The Leather Bag (*Kolog*): 'This is taken by the eldest brother of the

[1] Among the Nankanse, the time this is done is from two to five months after the final funeral.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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Kusase

deceased's senior wife (the eldest son's maternal uncle) because a man's senior wife owns the compound and has all the work of building it up. During a man's lifetime, the eldest son may not look into his father's bag or into his grain-store, or make use of anything personally used by his father.'[1]

Widows and Children: 'Widows go to the heir, but if he does not want them, they will know this, and already have spoken to the men whom they wish to marry. Before their heads have been shaved, they must not on any account have sexual intercourse with any one. Any man who is guilty of doing so, is said "to have cut the widows' strings" (*okoa pɔkɔ nwis*) and any infant whom such an adulterer looks upon will die. These widows' strings are made by an old woman who has ceased to bear children, and, after the funeral custom, she will cut them. After this they will appear in fresh leaves and people will know they are eligible to remarry. They will marry a clansman, not some one from another town. A son may not marry any of his father's widows if the father has ever had sexual intercourse with them. The deceased's brother, if not a *nyere*, may do so. The leaves which widows wear are *tanpiba* leaves (shea butter leaves). If a wife ever puts these on (during his lifetime) her husband will divorce her, and claim back the cows.[2]

'If the widow goes outside the clan of the late husband to marry, the heir will claim from her parents the cows paid, but deducting one cow for each child borne by her. Her father in turn will recover these cows from the man whom she then marries. The children then remain with the late husband's family. Should all the cows not have been paid when the first husband died, the heir, or whichever of the clansmen take her, have to pay the balance due, otherwise no new payments are necessary. It is taboo for the heir to take for himself two widows of the same man. He chooses which he will have and gives the other to his brother, that is, if these persons want them, otherwise they may marry a clansman.' Other customs in connexion with widows and the funeral custom will be dealt with under that heading.

Children: 'The children of the deceased belong to his fellow clansman who marries the widow, but across the Volta, among the Kusase whom we call the people of the West (*Toondem*), children of widows belong to the ghost (i.e. the late husband). If the widow marries outside her late husband's clan, any children she had by her first husband remain the property of his clansman, i.e. of the heir.'

[1] Compare the Nankanse.

[2] Compare Nankanse custom.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920) 1932
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428 *Inheritance of Wife's Property*: All the property which a wife brings with her and everything she earns later at her husband's compound by her own individual labour—by brewing beer, making baskets and pots —on her death goes to her children. If she has no children her father's family will take it, not her husband.[1]

Son's Property: His brother takes it, including any wives. A father may not take a son's widow.

Rites de Passage:

787 844 846 *Birth*: When a woman conceives, we consult the soothsayer about it, to find out if she will be delivered easily. When she gives birth, we send a long piece of wood notched in three or four places (according to sex of child) to the woman's mother. The husband may take this himself, or, if he has other children, send it by one of them. This stick is cut through at one of the notches and used for firewood. Three or four days later, her mother will come to visit her daughter, bringing some *dawa dawa*. A woman takes care not to be confined inside a room. She will either go into the yard, or cattle-kraal, or to the *saman* farm. Leaves are spread on the ground for her to bring forth upon. The afterbirth (*zar*)[2] is buried in the compound farm in a pot and covered by another pot. The heads of mother and child are shaved on the day the navel string is cut. That of the child is thrown down in the fowl-house, that of the mother in the *saman* farm. The mother and child are bathed in warm water containing certain leaves. From these leaves the child gets its father's taboos. If a woman is confined in her mother's village, they would not dare to bathe the infant in their medicine. They would send a messenger to her husband, who would then dispatch some one with his medicine to treat his wife properly. Neither the father nor any other male will see the child until its navel string is healed up. When it finally drops off, it is buried where the afterbirth was put. A child is not taken outside until it becomes black, but as soon as the mother is better she may go out and fetch water as usual. Sometimes a soothsayer may say that an infant must be taken outside for the first time by such and such a person. This woman must be a *poato* (i.e. a woman born in the 000 infant's father's town, a clanswoman). Five to six months after birth,

[1] Among the Nankanse, what a woman earns while living with her husband belongs to him. Her private property, however, which she brought with her, belongs to her daughter.

[2] In Nankane, the afterbirth of animals is called *zale*, that of human beings *yala*.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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577 784 social setting they identify Namoo communities by contraposition with non-Namoo neighbours. The phrase 'we of the Mampuru stock' merely labels a category of clans. It becomes a coefficient of conduct for the individual within the context of clanship, local, and community ties.

613 428 627 The dispute over the succession to the custody of the shrine (*bɔyar*) of the founding ancestor of Bɔyada biis at Tongo was a case in point. Saŋgbɔŋ, the son of the deceased custodian, who had been head of Yiyaam biis, one major segment of the lineage, refused to hand the shrine over to Tinta'alam, the oldest living member of the whole lineage. He alleged that the latter's segment (Yidaan biis) were 'sister's children', that is, an attached lineage descended from a Sii man. All the men of Yidaan biis rallied unanimously around Tinta'alam, angry and resentful at this slur on their status. 'If we don't get the *bɔyar*', they explained, 'people will scoff at us, saying that we are the descendants of a slave' (i.e. not the authentic progeny of Mosuor).

The case was argued, with an acrimony which was hard to conceal, before the chief. Saŋgbɔŋ contended that Yidaan biis could not be debarred from taking part in sacrifices to the shrine of Bɔyada, but, as an attached lineage, they had no right to its custody. Tinta'alam, speaking for the whole segment of Yidaan biis, denied this story as a pack of lies, but his opponent refused to abandon his position. At length the chief put the decisive question to the elders who were present. 'What', he asked, 'do the people of Sii taboo?' 'The tortoise (*pakur*), the water tortoise (*mieŋ*), and the crocodile (*baŋ*)', said one of the elders, 'and they dress their dead in a sheepskin loin-cover (*ba suona pɛhug*), and do not taboo the fowl.' 'And what about you Namoos?' queried the chief. 'Do you avoid the fowl, or do you not? Do you put a sheepskin loin-cover on the dead?' The elders answered this rhetorical question, 'Of course we taboo the fowl! And we use a goatskin for the dead. When Talis slaughter the sheep to gird their dead we would not even touch the meat.' 'Now,' continued the chief, 'if Yidaan had come to live here with his mother's brother as an acknowledged son of a Sii man, would he have discarded his forefathers' taboos?' 'Neither he nor his descendants', exclaimed the elders with one voice; 'if they had done so they would suffer for it, they would all die out.' And an attached lineage which Saŋgbɔŋ had adduced in support of his case was quoted in proof; for they still retain the taboos of the Talis because their founder had been legitimately and ritually a member of a Talis clan. Moreover, there was the case of Puliebɔr yidam, the Tongo lineage living at Gorogo, who keep their Namoo taboos. There was a time when they lost many members through death in quick succession, and diviners revealed that this was a retribution for trying to participate in the initiation cult of their Talis kin. The tone and attitude of the elders showed impressively the moral importance to the natives of these taboos. It was common knowledge, they said, that Tinta'alam and all the members of his segment observe the Namoo taboos. Saŋgbɔŋ's story was palpably false. However, to make the decision conclusive and to save it from rankling it was left to an oracle. [787] A fowl was slaughtered with an invocation to the ancestors and the posture in which it died showed which of the disputants was in the right.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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No one was surprised when Tinta'alɔm gained the verdict. Thus the ancestors themselves vouched for the legitimate status of Yidaan biis.

Other Namoo Clans

The most important of the Namoo clans that come within the political orbit of Tongo, though not related to it by ties of clanship, is the contiguous clan of Zoo. A number of Tongo families live on Zoo land, which was not so densely populated as Tongo 50 or 60 years ago and could therefore accommodate some of its overflow population. In the same way, a number of Zoo families have overflowed into the neighbouring locality of Gbambee, where they live among Tongo people. These ecological adjustments are facilitated, though not solely determined, by the structural ties between Zoo and Tongo, and by the fact that both are Namoo settlements. Ten out of the thirty-nine homesteads at Zoo belong to Tongo people, and they are members of all but one of the major segments of Tongo. By contrast, Tongo people are reluctant to move out to vacant parts of Zubiuŋ, where the people, though their neighbours and cognatic kinsfolk, are Talis in their ritual beliefs and practices. In recent years only one Tongo man has done this as a temporary measure.

The people of Zoo (Zoodɛm) comprise two maximal lineages. One of these, Zoo proper, is a maximal lineage of three segments, to one of which is attached a 'sister's son's' lineage. Their founding ancestor, Yikpɛmdaan, is said to have been a kinsman (*mabii*) of Mosuor, whom he accompanied from Mampurugu. As Zoodɛm marry any of the descendants of Mosuor, the fiction of original kinship (*mabiirɔt*) here emphasizes the cultural and political solidarity of the two groups, not a genealogical connexion.

Living side by side with Zoodɛm proper (Yikpɛmdaan biis) is another maximal lineage known as Zoo-Yiraaŋdɛm. These two maximal lineages exclude one another from the cults of their respective founding ancestors and from the ritual observances connected with them. Indeed, Zoo-Yiraaŋdɛm are affiliated to the Talis by ritual observance and cult. Nevertheless, Zoodɛm proper and Zoo-Yiraaŋdɛm have all the ties of clanship that hold between constituent lineages of the same clan who consider themselves to be *sunzɔp*. The explanation they give is that 'it is because we live together side by side (*tin kab ziin ni taaba la zugu*)'. Here clanship is attributed to local coalescence. These clanship ties are shown in all ceremonial matters that concern either of the lineages as well as in their co-operative enterprises. Though they do not take part in the esoteric ritual of one another's funeral ceremonies, they act as *sunzɔp* to one another in the public and exoteric phases of the ceremonies. If a party of Zoodɛm proper set out to pay their respects to a deceased relative-in-law, they will always be supported by some young men from Zoo-Yiraaŋdɛm; and if a Zoo-Yiraaŋ man is summoned to take a working party to help his father-in-law, he will always be accompanied by a few young men of the other lineage.

Zoo-Yiraaŋ is linked by ties of clanship to one of the component maximal lineages of Zubiuŋ.[1] Zoodɛm proper have no ties of clanship with Zubiuŋ or with any other clan. Yet they are often described as 'our

[1] See ch. VI.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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562 in sacrifices to their lineage ancestors. When an important sacrifice is
793 due to be made to a lineage *bɔyar*, the married *pɔyayabəlis* of the lineage
769 who live near enough to be able to attend, and especially the senior *pɔyayabəlɛg*, must be informed. Those who can, will attend the rite, and a prescribed portion (*tɔrəg*) of the animal sacrificed is the due of the *pɔyayabəlis*. This portion, consisting of the 'waist' (*sie*), i.e. part of the vertebral column and some of the ribs, together with prescribed bits of various internal organs and the intestines, is divided among the *pɔyayabəlis*, both married and unmarried, who are present. The allocation of a prescribed portion of a sacrificial animal to any group or individual is the most significant indication, in Tale culture, that that group or individual has a recognized formal status in the social structure.

428 An outstanding event in the life of a lineage is the inheritance (*vaagər*),
613 that is, the formal assumption of the custody, of a lineage *bɔyar* by a new
796 lineage head. Being old men generally, lineage heads seldom survive succession to this status for many years. Thus, the inheritance of a lineage *bɔyar* is an event of fairly frequent recurrence at periods varying
[182] from five to ten years. It is an occasion on which the integration of the lineage is at its maximum. Every member, male and female, who can do so makes an effort to attend. Those who are heads of families contribute fowls and flour to be added to the sacrifices on their behalf. All cognates by descent through women of the lineage who live near enough are invited, and those who are heads of families also bring contributions for the sacrifice. In short, the occasion is a sacrament in which all the descendants of the lineage ancestors, through both men and women, participate, and it is regarded as a particularly auspicious sacrament.

613 One of the first rites in the inheritance of a lineage *bɔyar* is the transfer
796 of the shrine from the homestead of its late custodian to that of his succes-
[787] sor. This rite is carried out by one male member of the lineage, almost invariably a member of the segment whose head has become head of the
562 lineage, and one *pɔyayabəlɛg* of the lineage, both selected by divination. Later, when many fowls brought by those present are sacrificed to the *bɔyar* to mark its transfer to a new lineage head, this pair are the first of the lineage members to present their offerings. Thus is symbolized the equality of status of men and women members of the lineage before the *bɔyar*, and the rights of women members and their descendants to the spiritual protection of the lineage ancestors.

604 As we have seen in our consideration of attached lineages, and as
x 618 we shall learn more fully when we examine the relations of maternal
587 uncle and sororal nephew,[1] there are circumstances in which descent through a woman is partially assimilated to the true agnatic line. To give only one example here, a sororal nephew (*ahəŋ*) of any degree whatsoever, that is, any member of another clan who has a cognatic link with the clan in question through an ancestress however remote, is formally equated with the sons of the clan in the matter of leviratic rights. An *ahəŋ* has the right to seek the hand of a widow of his maternal uncle's clan (*ahəb yiri*) on the same terms as a true member of that clan. He is, so to speak, exercising the right, corollary to the obligation of clan exogamy, that

[1] In *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi.*

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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241 471 431 the latter can claim a contingent right to the land and cannot be dispossessed without offence to their common ancestor or ancestress; or because the land was virgin at the time of the gift and the donor 'cut' (*kie*) it for the recipient in virtue of being the tendaana of the area. Thus all farm-land is either owned or in process of becoming owned.

471 613 The ownership (*solem*) of farm-land is a precise jural concept among the Tallensi. Briefly, it is vested in a lineage and forms the most important part of the lineage patrimony (*faar*). When, in course of time, this lineage splits up, some of the *faar* land will be apportioned among the resulting segments, each of which will retain perpetual and exclusive ownership of its portion. The rest of the *faar* land remains the common property of the whole lineage. Though the bulk of farm-land is owned by nuclear lineages, there is land owned by lineages of larger span than the average nuclear lineage.

471 428 613 577 To say that land is owned by a lineage is equivalent to saying that it is generally acquired by right of inheritance. All males of the lineage have the right to inherit lineage land, but at any given time control over it is vested in the head of the lineage, by right of seniority. He inherits (*vaa*) what amounts to full usufructuary rights within the limits of the co-existing rights of the other members of the lineage. The utilization of the land is at his discretion; he disposes of the crops; and in some settlements he is nominally free to pledge or to sell the land. But he is subject to restraints which observation shows to be very effective. He is bound to provide fairly for the wants of those who share the labour of farming with him. Tallensi formulate this obligation in terms of reciprocity within the productive unit, which they regard as a matter of natural justice and moral duty. They emphasize, however, that there is also a [686] strong practical sanction behind the rule. A man who deals meanly or unscrupulously with his younger brothers, sons, or brother's sons will find that they leave him at the first opportunity; and the strength of this sanction has increased now that young men, and even girls, can easily slip away to work abroad. In accordance with this obligation a lineage head always consults his dependants about the disposal of land, crops, or other patrimonial property.

688 471 432 There is also a religious sanction, the converse of the obligation to one's dependants, and the ritual projection of the common interest of the lineage in its patrimonial land. Inherited farm-land is a sacred trust of the ancestors. Their labour won it for human use, hallowed it, and preserved it for their descendants. It belongs to them. To pledge it is a slur on them; to sell it a sacrilege. 'It will kill deaths (*de kura kum*)'—the offended ancestors will cause deaths in the family of the seller—the natives say. And the strength of this sanction is such that only dire necessity will make a man sell ancestral land in the settlements where this is allowed. It is, in fact, an uncommon thing for farm-land to be sold, both for technological reasons, and on account of the ritual sanction against sale. In places like Tongo, land sales do occur, however, but appear to have been more frequent in the past than at present. Three out of every four nuclear lineages at Tongo possess farm plots that they claim have been purchased during the past two or three generations.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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his friend's children. Tale sentiment takes no cognizance of physical paternity in this situation. No kinship tie is recognized between the physiological father and the child he was deputed to beget. One might almost describe it as, from their point of view, a kind of artificial insemination.

The case of an unmarried woman's child (*yi-yeem-bii*) is different. It is brought up as the foster-child of her father or brother. If it is a girl, no difficulties occur, as she will eventually marry and Tale kinship ideas permit *her* children to regard her mother's lineage as their mother's brother's lineage (*ahəb yir*). She will even be allowed to marry into her mother's clan provided it is a different major segment of the clan. Several instances of this are on record; for no stigma attaches to anybody concerned, since an illegitimate child is not a true clan member.

An illegitimate boy's circumstances are not so easy. The evidence of two cases I was acquainted with amply confirms conventional opinion on this subject. Such a boy will grow up to all intents and purposes as a child of his mother's father's or brother's family and as a full member of the clan. He will be treated exactly like other sons of the family, whom he will call his brothers. His quasi-father will, for example, provide the cattle and take the responsibility for his marriage, as would not be done for a legitimate sister's son (*ahəŋ*) growing up in his maternal uncle's (*ahəb*) home. But he has two fundamental disabilities, which nothing can overcome and which pass, by the principle of the corporate identity of the lineage, to his agnatic male descendants. He has no right to inherit his quasi-father's patrimonial estate, though he may be permitted to do so if there are no other heirs; and he has no right to sacrifice directly to his spirit, or consequently, to the lineage ancestors. He cannot, therefore, succeed to the custody of lineage ancestors' shrines or hold an office vested in the lineage. The tie of true agnatic descent, which alone confers these rights, cannot be fabricated.

An illegitimate boy's status in the lineage is in fact, therefore, inferior to that of his quasi-brothers. He is always liable to a certain amount of covert contempt, though good manners forbid the mention of his irregular descent in the normal course of events. But if he gets involved in a quarrel with his quasi-siblings or quasi-clansmen, even as a child, they might well taunt him as an interloper (*zaŋkuomər*). His lot may be harder, if he has an intractable character, than that of a sister's son (*ahəŋ*) living with his mother's brother (*ahəb*); for the latter has a home of his own to fall back upon, where he is entitled, by right of legitimate descent, to his patrimonial inheritance, protection, and communion in the ancestor cult. In no circumstances, however, can an illegitimate son be deprived of those rights that belong to him. His quasi-father's home is his home, his mother's clan his clan. From him may spring an accessory lineage of the clan. In theory, incidentally, he may marry a daughter of a different major segment of his adoptive clan, but I know

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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593 602 sees any of Ɔmara's children misbehaving he can stop them and punish them if necessary. But ordinarily, though he can scold Ɔmara's children, he would cause grave offence to Ɔmara if he were to strike them. When, to quote a case that occurred in a similar structural setting, Pumaan's son threw a stone at Zaŋ's (Pumaan's younger brother's) wife, Zaŋ shouted anathemas at the boy and complained to the neighbours but dared not whip him; that was Pumaan's prerogative. For Zaŋ and Pumaan have separate households and are both sticklers for their rights. By contrast, Bɔyazie, who lives and farms with his older brother and gets on extremely well with him, can command obedience from and can discipline the latter's children by corporal punishment if need be. But even in such a case a man might hesitate to strike his brother's children if he and his brother were not on terms of the greatest mutual trust. If Saandi asks his brother's son to do an errand or a job for him the boy will usually obey, but he cannot be compelled to do so, as he can by his own father. Co-wives, as we know, are particularly cautious in dealing with one another's children.

593 There is, however, at any given time, only one man who has full paternal authority over a person, child or adult. In the first instance it is the man who begot him or her; and if this man dies, it is the man who takes on his social role, that is his distinctive rights and duties, by inheritance. The critical rights and duties are those connected with the land and other patrimonial property which the child's father owned or was heir to, and those connected with the cult of the child's father's father. In practice this means the head of the household to which the child belongs, who is also the person who sacrifices to the child's grandfather's spirit; and this limits the range to the child's father's brothers by the same father.

429 428 602 During a child's minority a father's agnatic cousin (brother in native terms) may act *in loco parentis* if the father's nearer male agnates are lacking; but it is a position of trusteeship rather than of full paternal authority. The son will set up an independent household as soon as he is able to farm for himself. He will then take possession of any land which his father acquired by his own efforts and will become the effective owner of, for example, bride-price cattle obtained for his own sister, though he cannot dispose of them without the formal consent of the head of the nuclear lineage. In relation to an adult, a father's cousin (or remoter classificatory 'brother' of the same inner lineage) retains only the ritual and jural attributes of a father; and this chiefly in virtue of being head of the inner or nuclear lineage to which the person belongs. Important as these attributes are, they represent a less direct and personal authority than that of one's own or one's proxy father.

603 We shall see later that the relations between grandchildren (*yaaŋ*, pl. *yaas*) and grandparents (*yaab-doog* or *ba-kpeem*, masc. *yaab-pɔk* or

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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The general rules governing inheritance and succession are simple. Because they are so closely tied up with the lineage structure and come under the strongest sanctions of the ancestor cult, they are seldom, to my knowledge, deliberately violated. But they leave room for adjustments and compromises, to some extent also for arbitrary action bordering on injustice, that seem, on the surface, to contradict them. Inheritance and succession follow the lineage and go from fathers to sons in order of seniority by generation or by age.[1] Within the inner lineage, that is, within the range in which classificatory kinship is recognized, seniority by generation (*dɔŋam kpɛmət*) takes precedence over seniority by age (*Naa-Yin kpɛmət*), beyond that range it is entirely a matter of seniority by age. This is what the maxim 'Kinship does not cross the (inner) lineage' implies. Since a 'son' cannot take precedence over a 'father' in the inner lineage, it follows that a man's next senior 'brother' inherits before his oldest 'son'. But Tallensi say 'A father's property is heritable; a brother's property is not (*Ba bon nɔvaagət; mabii bon pu vaagəra*)'. A 'brother' inherits from a 'brother' only what came to the latter from their 'father' (plus what has accrued to it by natural increase or improvement), not what the latter acquired by his own effort. Theoretically all 'brothers' are coheirs and the senior is merely the manager with first pick of the inherited property. It is this which leads to apparent anomalies. Thus when Kurug died his oldest brother Sawɔŋba inherited the *faar* land. But he preferred to stay on in his homestead at Gbambee rather than move back to the lineage *daboog* at Kuorəg. This homestead and the *faar* land surrounding it therefore remained in the hands of Kurug's sons. When Sawɔŋba died there were no more 'fathers' and the oldest generation of men in the inner lineage were all 'brothers'. Again the heir preferred to stay at Gbambee. If the next heir of Sawɔŋba's branch also refuses to go back to the lineage *daboog*, the chances are that the *faar* land there will cease to be regarded as patrimonial property of the whole inner lineage and will become *de facto* the *faar* of the branch that stayed on at Kuorəg.

The point of this is that whereas 'brothers' are equal to one another 'fathers' and 'sons' are not. A 'brother' inheriting lineage *faar* is not on the same footing as a 'father'; he cannot exercise all the rights and the authority of a 'father' which belong intrinsically and exclusively to a 'father's' social status, 'because of begetting (*dɔŋam la zugu*)'. A proxy father who has no brothers alive is at liberty to use his rights over *faar*

[1] The private property of women is an exception, but it is of relatively small importance in the total economy and its mode of transmission is, in fact, quite consistent with this principle. A woman's household utensils and garments are divided among her daughters and daughters-in-law on her death. Any livestock she has acquired by her own efforts or through her cognatic kin go to her sons and become their joint private property. The reason for this is that livestock, unlike utensils and clothes, can breed and so become *faar*, which is not transmissible by descent from or through women.

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in an arbitrary manner and to his personal advantage. If he wishes, he can, for example, pawn *faar* land or consume *faar* cattle in spite of the protests of his 'sons'. They have no redress. Or a father may use his position to distribute parts of the patrimonial land among his sons and proxy sons so that they should all have some good land to work for themselves after his death. The 'son' who inherits cannot cancel such gifts. A 'brother' would arouse fierce opposition from his junior 'brothers' if he attempted to use or dispose of *faar* arbitrarily without their consent. When disputes occur over the division of patrimonial lands or other property that passes by inheritance, it is always amongst a group of 'brothers', never between 'father' and 'sons'.

The difference of emphasis due to difference of generation appears most plainly in the inheritance of rights over people. Tallensi say that 'an older brother (who succeeds to headship of the household or lineage) is like a father (in relation to his juniors) (*Bier ŋman ni ba la*)'. But they also add that he is nevertheless not a father. An oldest brother, as senior son, steps into the shoes of his 'father' in relation to society at large. He does not acquire paternal status within the lineage *vis-à-vis* his 'brothers'. The rights he exercises over dependants are shared by them. And when he is succeeded by a 'brother' the latter does not assume new rights over these dependants but merely extends his existing rights.

Beyond the range of the inner lineage, where generation differences no longer count, questions of inheritance and succession turn chiefly on rights to the custody of the shrines of founding ancestors. The moral and ritual authority of heads of lineages beyond the range of the inner lineage rests on their custody of these shrines. Sometimes, ritual offices like the tɪndaanaship go with the succession to the custody of maximal lineage shrines; and in many cases this also confers rights to control the use of or to have sole use of certain farm-lands vested in the head of the maximal lineage.

It follows from the foregoing that when a 'father' dies there very often is a wide rearrangement of property relations in the whole hierarchy of lineage segments to which he belonged. To take an actual case, let us return to Ziŋgan biis (p. 152). When Yidaan, the head of the inner lineage, died in 1933 he was succeeded by his brother Kutɔbis as head of the domestic family. As Kutɔbis was oldest by generation in the inner lineage he succeeded to the custody of the lineage *bɔŋar* of Ziŋgan.[1] He would not have done so if, say, Ɔndieso had been senior to him by generation, though younger in years.

[1] About a generation ago, as is still the case with many lineages of this order, there was a tract of low-lying (*bo'og*) land that went with the *bɔŋar*, and the head of the inner lineage automatically had control over it. Any member of the lineage could, however, farm part of it with his nominal permission. After Pa'ana's death this land was divided into three parts, one part going to Ɔndieso's grandfather, another to Bayanlorag's descendants, and the third to Pa'ana's sons.

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613 428 Kutəbis also inherited the lineage *bəŋar* of Pa'anbəbis biis, of which nuclear lineage he and his sons and brother's sons form a segment. Again, this might have gone to the head of the other segment of Pa'anbəbis biis if he had been senior by generation or age to Kutəbis. With this *bəŋar* goes some land at the now abandoned site of Pa'anbəbis's homestead. If on Kutəbis's death the present head of Baŋanlərəg biis, Na'abzə, is still alive it will come to him.

Kutəbis also inherited the ancestral shrines of his immediate forebears Baŋana, Pa'ana, and Səmnam. With these shrines go several strips of land, especially the large home farm (*saman*) adjoining the homestead, which are the patrimonial property of Səmnam's line of descent. On Kutəbis's death they will be inherited by his younger 'brother' Pa'anbəbis II. Lastly, Kutəbis inherited some land which had been allocated to his father Baŋana as a private plot and thereafter became the patrimonial property of Baŋana's descendants.

He also assumed paternal rights over Yidaan's children. As Yidaan's sons farm independently of him, he cannot command their labour, though they are bound to assist him if he is hard-pressed and asks them to do so. In theory Kutəbis has the unrestricted right to dispose of his late brother's daughters in marriage, and to use the bride-price paid for any of them as he pleases. Actually, he would not marry off any of the girls without consulting Yidaan's oldest son, Da'amo'o, and would, as we have seen, hand over the bride-price to Da'amo'o. He retains the right, however, to draw on the bride-price of any of Yidaan's daughters in a difficulty calling for payments he cannot meet. We have quoted an instance of this on p. 155. Kutəbis also nominally inherited what was left of the livestock and clothes Yidaan had amassed,[1] but handed them over to Da'amo'o, retaining only the right to use them in an emergency. As regards Yidaan's widows, the older woman chose to stay on with Da'amo'o, as she was past the age of child-bearing. The younger accepted Kutəbis as she had a child at the breast. But it was confidently said, by members of the lineage, that she would probably leave him when her child was old enough for her to have another.

Parallel Significance of 'Not having a Mother alive'

613 593 784 601 On the principle that both parents have an equally indispensable part in the procreation and upbringing of children, whether or not one has a mother alive is also socially recognized. There is a general taboo binding on everybody who has a mother alive. They may not drink water out of an earthenware dish (*laa*); they must always use a calabash (*ŋman*), the normal drinking vessel. This is connected with the ritual use of earthenware dishes as food and drinking-vessels in the purification of

[1] This was because Kutəbis and Yidaan were *saarət*, full brothers. As we shall see later, full brothers have a very great degree of social equivalence and are entitled to inherit one another's personal effects in a way that half-brothers are not.

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593 siblings whose mothers are or were classificatory or clan sisters have stronger bonds than those whose mothers were not kin. Such ties, intersecting those of patrilineal kinship, are very common. The children of a woman and her *pɔyasoog*[1] (a 'sister' or other kinswoman she brings into the family as a child to look after her baby, and who later marries her husband or another man of the family) feel almost as close to each other as if they were full sisters' children. Most common, however, are cases such as that of Naabdiya and Barimoda, who trace their long-lasting amicable association back to the excellent personal relations of their mothers.

After adolescence, with the attainment of greater economic responsibility, the cleavage between *sunzɔ* siblings becomes more apparent, though it is still largely masked by membership of the same domestic and economic unit. Paternal control and the common needs of the unit hold their divergent interests in check. Sex differences become significant in the same way as with *soog* siblings; but brothers are usually partners in work and often comrades in leisure.

593 865 At this time the pattern of their future relations emerges clearly. Its keynote is a free-and-easy comradeship on terms of equality. Differences of age, formally recognized in the terminology of kinship and socially significant as they are in the distribution of authority, rights, and duties, hardly influence the personal relations of brothers in young manhood, or even later. No Talǝŋ, man, woman, or child, will submit to arbitrary authority without resistance. If any demand made on another person in virtue of superiority of generation, age, or sex is felt to be unreasonable or unjust it will be resisted. Quite small children, obedient as they are, jib at commands from parents or older siblings if they think them unreasonable or unfair.

593 This attitude is particularly strong among siblings. The basis of their social and personal relationships is the principle of sharing (*tɔt*). This principle underlies the social relations of siblings of any degree as well as of corporate units whose relative standing is assimilated to those of siblings, such as co-ordinate lineage segments. As we have noted earlier, it is one of the chief contrasts between the relations of father and son and those of brother and brother. It is summed up in the maxim: 'A man and his father do not share; a man and his brother share (*Nit ni u ba pu tɔta; nit ni u mabiig ntɔt*).'

593 428 423 As will be recollected, this maxim is most clearly illustrated in the rules of inheritance. Brothers are coheirs, even though the effective management of the lands and chattels they inherit from their father is vested in the oldest of them at any given time. Hence if a man has only 'sons' to consider in dealing with property that has come to him by inheritance from his father or brother, he is in theory free to dispose of it as he pleases. But if he is merely the oldest of a group of brothers

[1] Cf. Ch. IV. above.

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inheriting from their father he will be effectively restrained by his brothers. This rule is constantly met with in discussions of the pledging of property or the sale of land or cattle. Naabdiya summed up these rules very well in reference to the various farms held by the members of his inner lineage of Kunduzoor biis. First there was the home farm originally inherited and left intact by Kunduzoor at the time of his death, now owned by the last of his and his brothers' sons, Na'am. Na'am could, if he wished, sell some or all of this land, since on his death it will pass to men whom he calls 'sons'. 'We (the sons) could protest but we could not restrain him', said Naabdiya, 'but Kunduzoor (i.e. his spirit) would be angry and would slay Na'am.' Then there was some land Kunduzoor had himself acquired and left intact, heritable only by his direct descendants. The largest part of this was now owned by Na'ampa'ahya, the oldest of his true grandsons. 'He cannot sell this land', said Naabdiya; 'we, his brothers (who will inherit after him) could restrain him. In the old days we should not hesitate to draw arrows in order to do so, but now we would drag him to the chief, who would forbid the sale.'

The records of land sales in the past which I collected at Tongo amply confirm Naabdiya's statement. When Na'ampa'ahya inherited this land from the last of Kunduzoor's own sons it was as oldest of a group of brothers. So he had to 'cut off (*yma*)' portions of it for his other brothers. These distributed portions are normally re-amalgamated with the main block of patrimonial land as the brothers inherit from one another and add their portions to the main block. But if friction develops between brothers over a serious issue, it may result in one of them refusing to let his portion revert to the patrimonial land. Such a case occurred in Naabdiya's inner lineage in his father's time. One of Kunduzoor's sons, having become his father's heir, took offence at an apparent slight put upon him by a son of his father's brother. So he took an oath that his portion of the patrimonial land should never revert to the brother who would inherit from him and made a bond with his brothers that they should act likewise. Such a compact could never have been made by a man with his 'sons'. Characteristically, the compact left uneasy consciences. A generation later deaths occurred in the lineage. Diviners said they were a punishment for certain actions that resulted from this compact and Kunduzoor's grandsons were commanded to annul it. They could no longer do so in fact, but a token annulment and an expiatory sacrifice to their grandfather were considered sufficient.

In accordance with this principle we find that duties and rewards are distributed among siblings on a basis of equality of status, though in proportion to such distinguishing personal attributes as age, ability, need, and in conformity with the demands of the situation. When brothers work together as a team in the production of the household's food resources, each is expected to contribute the maximum share he is

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593 595 We might mention here that the institution of the sororate, which is considered by some authorities[1] to be the natural complement of the levirate, only exists in a rudimentary—some might say vestigial—form among the Tallensi. It comes up if a man loses his only wife and is left a lone widower. Then his father-in-law sends a party of mourners to the funeral who take with them a young girl of his clan—perhaps one of his own daughters, perhaps the daughter of a 'brother' of his inner or medial lineage. This girl, a real or classificatory sister of the dead wife, is presented to the grief-stricken widower. She has been brought, the father-in-law's messengers say, 'to sit on your knees, to console you, to dry your tears, to be your wife' and so take the place of her dead sister. It is, however, more a gesture of condolence than a real offer of a substitute for the dead wife. Tallensi say that very occasionally the girl might stay on as the wife of the widower; most commonly she goes home immediately after the funeral or within a few weeks. Her deputy wifehood is purely ceremonial, for she is usually too young to do all the housekeeping or to be slept with.

●428 The rules of inheritance among brothers also illustrate the gradation of their social equivalence in accordance with their genealogical distance. These rules have been considered from various angles in earlier contexts and little remains to be added. Their operation, as we have seen, depends on the conditions of economic co-operation to a very considerable extent. If two brothers farm together they automatically have joint rights in all lands, livestock, and other resources they possess. If one dies the other does not so much inherit his property and position in society as amalgamate it with his own. What was formerly managed by two men conjointly now becomes the concern of one man. There is practically no change, to begin with, in the social relations of their dependants as the result of the death of one brother. When Nindoyat died his *soog* brother Yintee inherited the homestead they had both occupied. Nindoyat's wives at first stayed on as Yintee's wives, his children naturally remained in the homestead. They had lost their own father, but there was no change in their social position or their economic condition as a result of his death. If brothers farm independently they inherit from each other in order of seniority and of degree of consanguinity. Patrimonial property, rights, and ritual objects that have been transmitted intact from their fathers are inherited strictly by seniority amongst the group of brothers who trace their descent to the original holder of these possessions. But property acquired by the deceased's own father goes only to his brothers by the same father, in order of seniority. And the custody of his children will pass to his genealogically nearest brother whether or not he is the heir to the patrimonial property.

593 428 Here a revealing jural fiction deserves mention. Brothers are thought

[1] Cf. Lowie, R., *Primitive Society*, p. 33.

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to be closer to one another than father and son—this is one aspect of their social equivalence, as we have previously observed. In theory this holds for any brother of the same inner lineage, in practice it is only full or half-brothers who feel such close bonds. Now any land a man acquires by his own efforts goes to his sons, not to his brothers. There is no question about this. The sons have contributed by their labour to the acquisition of the land and this is their title to it. Cattle acquired by purchase also belong to the man's sons; but the heir to the patrimonial property, if he is a proxy father to or a father's brother's son older than the man's own sons, has titular control over the use to which they may wish to put any of their father's livestock. It is different with clothes and weapons; and here the fiction we have mentioned comes into the picture. Clothes are very intimately associated with a person; they are a sort of extension of his individuality, as was suggested in an earlier chapter. A man's bow, his quiver of arrows, his knife, and his spear are also thought of as symbols of himself as an individual in a way that land is not. The fiction is that such personal effects should be inherited by a man's brothers, not by his sons. Thus when a man's funeral is finished his brothers of the inner lineage assemble in his *zɔŋ*. His oldest son fetches all his personal effects in. But the brothers do not divide them amongst themselves. At most they might take an arrow apiece from the dead man's quiver. The other personal effects they will restore to the sons. 'We have seen it and now you keep it', they say. A full or half-brother, especially one who has farmed with the deceased, may, if he desires, take some garments. He may take all if the dead man's children are all too young to farm for themselves, as he then becomes their proxy father in fact as well as in name. Even then he might return some of the clothes to the sons when they are old enough to use them.

In the same way a woman's personal effects go to her daughters on her death, but her close sisters may claim some of them if they wish. For example, every woman accumulates a number of calabashes (*ymaa*, pl. *ymana*) during her lifetime. There is a good material reason for this, for there is hardly a more useful domestic utensil than the ubiquitous calabash dish. A woman will, however, store away her best calabashes for use on special occasions only. As she grows older she collects more and more of these select calabashes, and an old woman may have as many as forty or fifty. She keeps them in her large string bag (*zaalɔŋ*), hung up in the darkest corner of her sleeping-room. At the bottom of the *zaalɔŋ* bag is the largest and finest calabash. This will be part of her *kumpiog* (basket of death) when she dies. In it she keeps her particular treasures. Because of this an old woman's *zaalɔŋ* is as sacrosanct as a man's granary—to which, in fact, Tallensi compare it. No one but the old woman herself ever looks into the bottom calabash of the *zaalɔŋ*. When she dies an old woman's *kumpiog* is taken to her oldest daughter, who also gets the *zaalɔŋ* bag. But she does not get all

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the calabashes. The old woman's close sisters have first pick of the calabashes and the remainder are divided among her daughters and daughters-in-law.

Outside the inner lineage, as has been previously indicated, succession goes by age seniority. Succession to the custody of a maximal lineage *boyar* or to a politico-ritual office such as a chiefship or tendaanaship follows this rule. This, as we can now see, is in conformity with the principle that members of the same maximal lineage or clan who are not of the same inner lineage are titular 'brothers'.

It is in the usages of extended kinship, however, that the social equivalence of siblings is most apparent. We have already dealt at length with the extensions of parental roles within the lineage and it is necessary only to observe that they are based on the principle of the social equivalence of brothers. We shall find, in the next chapter, that it is an equally important factor in the web of matrilateral and sororal kinship ties, outside the agnatic lineage.[1] We shall see that, as in the ramification of lineage structure, so in extra-clan kinship bonds the tie of siblingship is the principal mechanism of their wide-spreading reticulation.

[1] This is Radcliffe-Brown's theory of the chief mechanism responsible for classificatory kinship in primitive societies. Tale material amply supports him. See Radcliffe-Brown, 'Social Organisation of Australian Tribes', previously cited, and his articles on 'The Mother's Brother in South Africa', *South African Journal of Science*, xxi, 1924, and on 'The Study of Kinship Systems', *J.R.A.I.*, lxxi, 1941.

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to do this service because, as a kinsman of the sufferer, he naturally wishes to see him free of his evil fate. He is held to desire this the more strongly because his *ahɔb* sacrifices on his behalf. Hence his welfare depends on the continued life and the perpetuation of the lineage of the *ahɔb*, both of which are threatened by the evil Predestiny. Lastly, he is specially suitable because a complete stranger might use the opportunity to do the sufferer magical harm, while a patrilineal kinsman of his might be contaminated by the evil Predestiny. Again, anybody who can be identified as an *ahɔŋ*, in however remote a classificatory sense, may be asked to perform this service.

The Father's Sister

We have left the discussion of the relationship of father's sister (*ba-pɔk*) and brother's child (*bii*) for this chapter, although it is not a relationship of extra-clan kinship. Father's sister and brother's child are members of the same clan and lineage. But Tallensi associate the father's sister with relatives outside the clan. This is due to her marrying out of the clan, to her having no significant public voice in the affairs of the lineage, and to her being unable to inherit lineage property or ancestor shrines.[1] Thus a native usually compares his relationship with his father's sister to his relationship with his mother's brother, not to his relationship with his parents. It is thought of more as the opposite of the relationship between sister's son and mother's brother than as an item in the scheme of intra-familial or intra-lineage relationships.

As in the case of mother's brother and sister's child, the bond between father's sister and brother's child tends to be more effective for brother's sons than for brother's daughters. In the case of the brother's sons it is reinforced by the ties a woman has with her paternal lineage and by the ties her children have with their mother's brother and his sons. In the case of brother's daughters, it is attenuated because the daughters tend to be dispersed by marriage and their relationship with their father's sister is much more a purely personal affair.

Compared with the mother's brother, the father's sister (*ba-pɔk*) counts for little in the web of extra-clan kinship. Tallensi say this is because she is a woman. 'It is not she who sacrifices for you but you (her brother's son) may one day sacrifice on her behalf.' At the same time they declare that 'she is your father'. I have several times had an old woman introduced to me by a man or a woman as 'my father'. Eŋwala, explaining her affection for her full brother's son, Anaaho, said in the stock phraseology, 'Is he not my child? If you and your brother together have a child, is he not also your child [as much as your brother's]?

[1] Except, as has been mentioned before if she is the last surviving member of the lineage. Even then she does not inherit the ancestor shrines but merely sacrifices to them, as if she were acting on behalf of her deceased father. She can never inherit lineage land.

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scattered compounds, or whether closer building between compounds, on land previously available for farming, enforced the system because of the increasing distance to bush land. The result is the same, however, from our point of view. Farmers living on the edge of the densely populated areas frequently have bush farms, which are farmed by shifting methods of cultivation, as well as compound farms which are farmed continuously. 241

Land Tenure.

The customs associated with the acquisition and retention of land are intimately bound up with the religion of the people. Land is recognized as having a "spirit" which requires placating to deliver of its goodness. This is done through the "tindana" (Nankani), who is the intermediary between the "spirit of the land" and the people. It is frequently heard that "Chiefs command people, not land", and a Chief approaches the land through the "tindana". Every area has a tindana; if an area develops to an unmanageable size, a new "tindana" may be appointed by the tindana who exercised authority there before it developed. The area administered by a Chief, however, is fixed; so that Chiefs' and tindanas' boundaries do not necessarily coincide. 793 622 425

To acquire a new area of land, *i.e.*, land not known to be claimed by anyone, a prospective occupant will generally first approach the Chief of the district and state his requirements. If the Chief is satisfied as to the probity of the applicant he will refer him to the tindana, who has the final say in the matter. An application is seldom, if ever, refused. A suitable offering is made through the tindana to propitiate the spirit of the land, and the tindana may indicate a site for the new compound, and make suggestions with regard to the crops to be planted. The question of rent does not arise since there are no "money crops" and agricultural land has no value in the economic sense; there are a number of seasonal dues, however, given voluntarily to the spirit of the land, through the tindana. [427]

In demarcating areas, such natural objects as stone outcrops, water-courses, and trees, are observed. This explains the reason for the irregular outline of most farms. Once land has been conveyed through the tindana, it is held in perpetuity by the family receiving it. Presumably, when a compound is first built in a bush area, sufficient land exists immediately around it to satisfy the requirements of the family. When the family grows up and the elder sons marry, they may choose to build compounds of their own. A new compound is made as close to the parent compound as possible, either upon a new land acquired from the tindana, or upon land 428 423

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428 allotted by the father. On the death of the head of the family the male survivors inherit the land in varying proportions as tenants in 423 common with benefits of survivorship. The eldest son assumes the responsibilities of his father and may elect to live either in his father's compound, or to remain in his own. In either case he will receive a large share of his father's farm and retain also an interest in his own. After a number of generations the distribution and ownership of land becomes very complicated in congested areas and considerable fragmentation of holdings takes place. Land not in use may be lent to another for farming, but often with a stipulation to plant non-exhausting crops.

Distribution of Population.

162 The distribution of population is very variable both from one political area to another and within each area. If one takes the the district as a whole, 3,559 square miles, the population by the 1931 census (7) is shown to be 406,566 persons; this gives a density of population of 114 per square mile (c.f. South Mamprusi 23 per square mile, and Western Dagomba 15). It is estimated that at least one-third of the total area is uninhabited, and much of this is fertile alluvial land near to rivers, where tse-tse flies abound. In other areas ruins are found for which slave raiding, sleeping sickness, and yellow fever, are variously held responsible. Table I below gives the distribution of tribes and population.

Table 1.—Distribution of Population in North Mamprusi.

Political Area	Area, square miles	Total Population	Density of Population per sq. ml.	Tribes
Navrongo ...	1,551	120,870	78	Nankani, Kassena, and Builsa.
Zuarungu ...	781	133,981	172	Nankani, Tallensi, and Nabdam.
Kusasi and Br. Togoland ...	807 420	110,614 41,101	137 98	Kusasi, Busanga, Bemoba and strangers.
Total ...	3,559	406,566	114	—

Political Organisation.

631 History shows that North Mamprusi was continually harrassed from outside (8) until comparatively recent times. The Mamprusis in the South, who were at one time a powerful and organised tribe,